

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 023441
ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 AS-01 ISO-00 PRS-01 L-03 SAB-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /058 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/PAN:SMBELL
APPROVED BY ARA/PAN:SMBELL
EMBASSY PANAMA:WJJORDEN
-----022144Z 027531 /72-61
P 022004Z PEB 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: U.S.-PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: CONGRESSIONAL
SUPPORT

1. THERE FOLLOWS THE TEXT OF A QUOTE JOINT PRESS STATE-
MENT END QUOTE ISSUED BY SENATORS SPARKMAN AND CASE
FOLLOWING A BREAKFAST MEETING WITH MINISTER BOYD WHICH
AMBASSADOR JORDEN ATTENDED. NINE OTHER SENATORS INCLUDING
THE MAJORITY LEADER ATTENDED.

2. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT -- A SIGNIFICANT SIGNAL
OF A SENATORIAL WILLINGNESS TO APPROACH THE PANAMA
PROBLEM NOT ONLY CONSTRUCTIVELY BUT IN A BIPARTISAN WAY.

3. BEGIN QUOTE. IN THE COURSE OF THE PAST COUPLE OF
MONTHS, WE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SENATE FOREIGN
RELATIONS COMMITTEE HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS
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PAGE 02 STATE 023441

THE ISSUE OF THE PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRESIDENT
CARTER, SECRETARY VANCE AND PANAMANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
AQUILINO BOYD.

FROM THESE DISCUSSIONS IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CARTER
ADMINISTRATION INTENDS TO SEEK THE ABROGATION OF THE 1903

TREATY AND THE NEGOTIATION OF A NEW AGREEMENT TO GOVERN
THE OPERATION, MAINTENANCE AND DEFENSE OF THE CANAL. THIS

DECISION IS IN KEEPING WITH THOSE MADE BY THE THREE
PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATIONS OF PRESIDENTS FORD, NIXON AND
JOHNSON.

THE PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS ARE A BI-PARTISAN ISSUE
AND IN A BI-PARTISAN SPIRIT WE FULLY SUPPORT THE NEGOTIATING
EFFORT. WE BELIEVE IT IS IN OUR NATIONAL
INTEREST TO DEVELOP A NEW TREATY RELATIONSHIP WITH
PANAMA AND WE ENCOURAGE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO
BRING THE NEGOTIATIONS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION AT THE
EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE.

WE WISH TO MAKE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT OUR ENDORSEMENT
OF THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS AN
AUTOMATIC ENDORSEMENT OF A NEW PANAMA CANAL AGREEMENT.
WE WILL JUDGE ANY NEW AGREEMENT ON ITS MERITS AND IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE NEGOTIATING GUIDELINES APPROVED BY
THE 94TH CONGRESS: 'ANY NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY OR
AGREEMENT ... MUST PROTECT THE VITAL INTERESTS OF THE
UNITED STATES IN THE CANAL ZONE AND IN THE OPERATION,
MAINTENANCE, PROPERTY AND DEFENSE OF THE PANAMA CANAL'.

WE EXPECT THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO SEEK CONGRESSIONAL
ADVICE AND CONSENT WITH RESPECT TO THESE GUIDELINES AND
WE LOOK FORWARD TO A CLOSE, CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIP
DURING THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. END QUOTE.

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PAGE 03 STATE 023441

VANCE

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERNATIONAL CANALS, NEGOTIATIONS, TREATY RATIFICATION
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE023441
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SMBELL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770037-0895
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770291/aaaafuly.tel
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Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Message ID: 0d439cce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3454861
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 970904
Subject: U.S.-PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT
TAGS: EWWT, PFOR, PN
To: PANAMA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0d439cce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009